

Excellencies, Heads of Delegations, distinguished guests and participants; Australia is delighted to be participating in the 7th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

I thank the Government of India and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction for organising this Conference.

Asia is the engine of global growth – a fact that offers great opportunities for economic growth and promising social change across our diverse region. But in the most disaster-prone region in the world, we still have a lot of work to do to ensure our countries, cities, towns and villages are as resilient as possible to the most severe of events.

Australia is firmly committed to the implementation of the *Sendai Framework* and our domestic policy settings are consistent with this important initiative. We acknowledge there are gaps in our existing approaches that require further work and over the coming years, Australia will focus closely on:

- Improving cross-sectoral partnerships and community engagement in recognition that government can't do everything on its own
- Supporting better risk awareness and risk mitigation, and
- Improving capabilities for disaster resilience.

Australia is proud that its 2011 *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience* is standing the test of time. It continues to be the policy statement that assists all Australians, including key decision makers, to make informed, risk-based decisions. There is more to do and the Australian Government is committed to developing a better understanding of our disaster risks and focusing not only on recovery but also prevention and mitigation. To this end, we have been working with our state and territory counterparts to identify ways to rebalance that equation through funding and other policy levers.

The Australian Government is committed to working closely with the private sector to share the responsibility for disaster risk reduction. The Australian Government will continue to work closely with organisations like the Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience and Safer Communities to pursue private sector led solutions. The Australian Business Roundtable is an excellent example as it brings together government, private sector and non-government expertise to work collaboratively to build safer and more resilient communities.

As we take strong and direct action at home, Australia is also playing its part abroad; through reshaping our aid policy settings and the development of new investments to reflect our commitments to the *Sendai Framework* and the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. In 2015-16 we provided more than \$86 million to support partner countries in the Indo-Pacific region to meet their commitments to the *Sendai Framework*. We are also taking concrete steps to assist our neighbours build climate resilience. At the Paris Climate Change talks last November, Prime Minister Turnbull announced a commitment of at least \$1 billion over five years in official development assistance on climate change and resilience. This is in addition to our role as co-chair

of the Green Climate Fund; our pursuit of increased cooperation on response matters through the East Asia Summit Rapid Disaster Response Toolkit project; and our investment in the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.

Our partnership with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction is very important to the Australian Government. Our current three year partnership is underpinned by \$5.7 million to support implementation of the *Sendai Framework* in the Asia-Pacific region.

Australia will continue to work with international partners to overcome important challenges related to disaster risk reduction. Through our collective efforts we are confident that this will lead to greater stability and prosperity in the region.

Excellencies, I will conclude with Australia's voluntary statement of action, we will:

- Focus on disaster risk reduction, through continued implementation of our *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience*, which complements our commitments in the *Sendai Framework*.
- Invest in disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and climate resilience through the Australian Aid Program with a specific focus on the Asia-Pacific region.
- Prioritise support which assists partner governments in the Asia-Pacific region to meet their commitments to the Sendai Framework.
- Foster collaborative partnerships with business and other sectors to drive the domestic and regional disaster resilience agenda.
- And when disaster strikes, our support will assist countries to build back safer and better able to withstand future events.
- Finally, Australia will work with our international partners to ensure that the 2017 Global Platform makes a positive contribution to accelerating Sendai implementation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thank you.